

Gods Providence

In the midst of

CONFUSIONS.

Set out in a

SERMON

Preach'd at the *Savoy*, *January* the 30. 1681.

Being the Anniversary of the Martyrdom of

King Charles I.

By *Anthony Horneck* D. D.

In the *S A V O Y*,

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Good Tidings

CONTRAST ON S.

SERMON

Preached at the Church, Newbury, the 30th 1831.

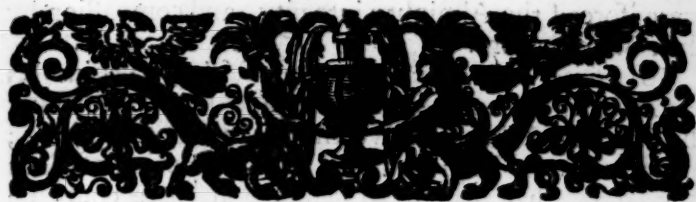
By the Author of the "Mystic of the Cross."

King Charles I.

By the Rev. Mr. D. D.

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P S A L. XCIX. Vers. I.

The Lord reigneth, let the People tremble.



Hether this *Psalms* was written by *Moses*, as the *Jewish Rabbins* think, or by some other Prophet, or why this *Psalms* with four and twenty more is destitute of a Title, when all the rest have suitable Inscriptions, is not material to enquire. The *Psalms* contains a rehearsal of Gods Wonderful Works in the Desert, when he went before his People in the Wilderness, when God wrought Miracles every hour, and the Cloudy Pillar by Day, and the other of Fire by Night, like a Guardian Angel protected the Mighty Host, and rendred them formidable to all Nations that heard of their Name, or had notice of their Approaches ; or, we may call it a Spur to fervent Devotion, and profound Veneration of the infinite Majesty of Heaven, who never leaves such Devotional Prostrations unrewarded ; and if sincere, crowns them usually with loving Kindnesses and tender Mercies : Instances whereof are given in *Moses*, *Aaron*, and *Samuel*, Men who by their Prayers bow-

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ed the Heavens, and made God come down, and as it were forced the Almighty into pity, and compassion by their Supplications.

To excite our Attention, the *Psalmist* begins his Hymn with an expression great, and lofty, becoming the Supreme Being, and worthy of an Infinite Majesty; In a few words, he gives us the best Description of Gods Providence, that reason can desire, and there could be nothing more magnificent, than to say of him, *The Lord reigneth, let the People tremble.*

That which will oblige me to deviate, or vary a little from the received Translation, is the ambiguity of the word *יָרָא* in the Original, which we render tremble. The word in other places of Scripture stands for being tumultuous, or in a rage, in confusion, or in great disorder, and this signification seems to me to be most proper here, and to render the sense much clearer, and if you ask me, what that sense is, I shall deliver it in this Proposition.

Propos. *In the midst of the greatest tumults and disorders, the Divine Providence is awake; In the midst of the most lamentable confusions, Gods management of things is orderly, and regular.*

This must necessarily be the Result of the Text, if we Construe the words according to the Interpretation I have given, and the words will naturally bear, viz. *The Lord reigneth, let the People in a Commonwealth, or Kingdom be never in so great disorder, or confusion; even then, when all things seem to be turned upside down, the Lord reigns by his Providence.*

Let Heathens and Epicureans fancy that God is asleep, when things go contrary to our Carnal Wishes, and fond Expectations, we that enjoy Gods Revelations are better

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better taught ; And though the vast Ship of this inconstant World were sinking, we have Reason to believe, that the great Pilot who sits at the Helm, is broad awake, and hath pregnant Reasons for the Dispensation. It's a weak Argument, that God is careless, because we cannot pry into the Reasons of his Actions ; nor can the inference be less than Childish, to conclude that the Almighty enjoys his ease, regardless of things below, because our selves are not Omniscient ; We could not be Creatures if we were so, and should lose our dependance upon the God above, if our Wisdom did equal his, or could know all the depths of his Actions.

Yet so great is his goodness, that he hath not left himself without Witness, and as mysterious as his goings in the Sanctuary seem to be, he hath let his Servants know the Order of his Providence. So great an advantage are the Scriptures, that while *Pagans*, like Moles, grovel in the Earth, unable to apprehend what is done above ; We like Children of Light, can unfold Gods darker Proceedings, and inform the World of the equality of his Ways.

When the ten Tribes revolted, and shook off their obedience to their Liege Lord *Rehoboam*, we may easily guess what disorders the *Jewish* Commonwealth then laboured under, and what confusions that juncture of Affairs produced. *Judah* fought against *Israel*, and *Israel* against *Judah*, and in both Parties without all peradventure were Discontented Men, who added Fuel to the Fire, and threw Brimstone into the Flame to make it soar the higher ; yet while the Republick lies in that Convulsion-fit, God dispatches a Prophet to the Tribe of *Judah*, *Shemaiah* by Name, with order to tell them, *1 Kings 12. 24. This saith the Lord, ye shall not go up, nor fight against your Brethren the Children of Israel, re-*

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turn every man to his own house, for this thing is from me; i. e. Let no Man wonder at these Disorders, for I have a Hand in them, and my Providence doth manage them; And to this purpose, *Amos* brings in God speaking, *Am. 3. 6. Is there any evil, i. e. any evil of confusion in the City, and the Lord hath not done it?* This, even *Jehoram*, as wicked as he was, could not but be sensible of, and therefore when in the great Famine of *Samaria* People were ready to devour one another, and things were come to that extremity, that Women fell a dressing their own Children for their Dinner, the King desperate and melancholick, cries out, *This evil is of the Lord, i. e. How dismal soever the state of things appears, the Almighty hath given order for it, and it's he, whose Power and Wisdom manages this Calamity.*

But this Subject will require some elucidation, and therefore I shall consider here, 1. *What those Disorders, and Confusions are, which seem to infer a carelessness of Providence.* 2. *Why God suffers, and permits such Confusions and Disorders.* 3. *How his Providence appears in them, and which way he manages these seeming Contradictions.*

1. *What these Disorders and Confusions are, which seem to infer a carelessness of Providence.*

1. *Oppression of the Innocent and Poor*, such as we find among the *Jews* in the time of *Amos* and *Jeremy*, *Am. 6. 12. c. 8. 6. Jer. 7. 6.* And no doubt a dismal sight it is, to see the Rich invade the Poores little all without control, and Great Men crush those of an Inferiour Rank by their lawless Power; to see *Ahab* take possession of *Naboth's* Vineyard; and *Ziba* because in favour with the King, wrong the lame and harmless *Mephibosheth*; to see the *Widdow* scorn'd, because she hath no Potent Friends; and the *Orphan* trampled on, because his injurious Adversary can

can out-Bribe him ; to see a *Jeremy* thrown into a Dungeon, because he speaks the truth ; and a *Daniel* hurled into a Lyons Den, because he cannot conform to the looser Customes of the *Persian* Court ; to see an *Aristides* driven into Exile, because of his Justice, and an *Alci-biades* deposed from his Office, because the rash *Lyfander* lost the Field. Oppression as it is enough to make even a Wise Man mad, according to *Solomon*, *Eccles.* 7. 7. so it is an Argument, that Justice hath forsaken the Tribunal ; and without Justice, Human Societies become Cages of Ravenous Birds, and the Band, which is to hold Mankind together, must necessarily be dissolved. It's this maintains the health and vigour of the Body Politick, and this once taken away, must on the other side cast it into violent Distempers ; Distempers which render it not only weak, but deformed and odious, and must at last be the Death of it. It's this whereby God intended Kingdoms, and Cities should be governed, and Men no sooner receive their being, but at the same time receive the Principles of this Vertue. Nature obliges them to it, as much as it doth to self preservation, and with their Mothers Milk they imbibe these Inclinations ; and on these Inclinations the wholesom Laws of all Nations are grounded ; and whatever Orders are contriv'd by Wise men for the well governing of Societies, do all go upon this supposition. Nay, God himself is concerned to see this Justice maintained in Commonwealths, and it is part of his Prerogative to preserve its Laws inviolable, so that it's being lost in a Corporation, seems to reflect upon him ; and as it was he alone, that first taught Men to gather into Societies, so to let Oppression come among them, which is the Bane, that kills them, to a sensual Eye seems to be no small disparagement to his Providence.

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2. Such another Disorder is, when a *Covetous, Ambitious Prince* is suffered to spoil and harras the Countrey of his Neighbour Prince, who is at Peace with him, and not so much as dreams of any Hostile Approaches, an instance whereof we have in *Benhadad*, who without any other cause but that of Interest, and his own glory, fell upon *Baashah* King of *Israel*, being in League with him, and surprizing his Territories, plundered, and made himself Master of *Ijon*, and *Dan*, and *Abelmaine*, and all the Store-cities of *Naphtali*, 2 Chron. 16. 3, 4. A strange way of War ! to fall upon his Confederate for no other reason, but because he is more Potent, and to deprive the other of his Right and Inheritance, because he is too weak and feeble to oppose him : To fancy because I have got a numerous Army, that therefore I may do what I list ; and because I can be more wicked than another, that therefore I may lawfully be so. To imagine because I am a King, that therefore I am exempt from all Laws, and because there is no Man above me, that therefore I may crush whomsoever I have a mind to, to flatter my self, because God hath advanced my Throne above other Potentates, that therefore the rest must be my Vassals, and because they cannot easily resist me, that therefore I may make them fall a Sacrifice to my Lust and Glory. Conceits monstrous and odious, even to *Pagans* and *Infidels* ! and which deserve not only the sharpest Satyrs, but Gods severest Vengeance : We look upon *Joab* as a Villain, because he killed *Amasa* Kissing, and *David* justly called him the worst of Men, because he Murdered *Abner* under pretence of Friendship, and shed the Blood of War in Peace.

Thus *Ninus* takes what he can get, because his Neighbours are unarmed : and *Sesostris* of *Egypt* discontented
that

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that he hath so little, makes even his Familiars a prey to his Ambition : Actions which in Private Men would be punished with the Hangmans Sword, and in Persons of a lower Condition, revenged with the most exquisite Racks and Tortures ; Yet it is not Power, can justify a Sin, nor the greatness of a Man turn a Vice into Vertue. Robbery is a Crime in a Prince as much as in a Subject, and stealing other Mens Goods the greater injustice in a King, by how much he stands higher, than other Mortals. No Prince hath power to act against the Law of Nature, and what is intrinsically Evil, can never be made Good by the most specious pretences of Authority.

Princes that are given to such injustice are Enemies of Mankind, and no marvel, if the Disorders they cause in the neighbouring Dominions are astonishing, for the Sin it self is prodigious. That which amazes the Spectator more, is, that such Unrighteousness very often prospers, and the Disorders it causes, tends to the Renown and splendour of the Perfidious Conquerer, for it makes him not only more adored by Parasites, and Flatterers at home, who call him, *Great, Invincible, and a Demy-God*, but formidable to Nations afar off, which like innocent Animals, at the approach of the Ravenous Hawk, quake as the Rumour spreads of his speedy, though treacherous Victory ; A Scene of Affairs, which Providence seems to suffer in, and while he, in whose Hands the Hearts of Princes are said to be, lets loose the Reins, and suffers them to do what they list, Men guided by sense can suspect no less, than that the Lord doth not see, neither doth the God of *Jacob* regard it ; as those, *Psal. 94. 7.*

3. *Civil Wars ; when Men of the same Countrey and Nation breaking into Factions, imbrue their hands in one anothers*

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another's Blood, and thrust their Swords into one another's Bowels, as the Midianites, *Jud. 7. 22.* When Neighbour fights with Neighbour, and those of a Mans own House prove his greatest Enemies; when Members of the same Commonwealth first run into Discontents among themselves, and thence into open Hostility one against the other; when different Parties first give one another reproachful Names, from reproachful Names come to Animosities, and feed their Envy and Malice so long till it break forth into a consuming Fire. There is hardly any Nation but some time or other hath felt the smart of these Intestine Divisions; and if any have escaped the blow, it must be, because there was nothing in the Country worth contending for. How many Mens lives were lost at *Rome* in the Contentions betwixt *Marius* and *Sylla*, betwixt *Catilins* Party, and the *Senate*, betwixt *Pompey* and *Cesar*, every School-boy knows, that hath read the History. This was the fate of the hot Disputes at *Thebes*, betwixt *Ismenias* and *Archias*, at *Jerusalem* betwixt *Jason* and *Menelaus*, in *Greece* betwixt the *Dorians* and *Ionians*, at *Athens* betwixt *Thucydides* and *Timon*, in *Italy* betwixt the *Guelphs* and *Gibellines*, at *Constantinople* betwixt *Hypatius* and the *Court Party*, at *Carthage* betwixt *Hannibal* and *Hanno*, at *Florence* betwixt the *People* and the *House of Medices*, in *France* betwixt the *Hedui* and *Sequani*, and he that shall peruse our own Chronicles, take a view of the Quarrels betwixt the *White* and *Red Rose*, and all the Seditions, Rebellions, and Divisions under the several Kings of this Island, and add to all this what he remembers of the late Civil War, that set *Ephraim* against *Manasseh*, and *Manasseh* against *Ephraim*, and they both against *Judah*, cannot but behold a very sad Landskip of Horrour and Confusion.

To

To see Men Drunk with their Prosperous Fortunes, and angry with their own Happines; To see them fall foul one upon another, and they that might live in ease and safety, like Mad Dogs bite and devour one another; To see them enraged one against another upon a *punctilio* of State, and as if their Lives were nothing worth, throw them away because both Parties cannot be of the same Judgment; To see them not only begin their Quarrels upon slight Occasions, but pursue them unto Death and Ruine, as it is an Argument of intolerable Pride and Self-conceitedness, so it's like, the careless Spectator, that sees the Tremendous Effects of it, will wonder, what's become of Providence in such Disorders.

4. *Massacres*: When the true Religion is persecuted, as a Pestilent Heresy, and mighty Endeavours are used to Extirpate its Renown and Glory: when Fire and Faggot become Arguments to confute it, and Swords and the Gallows are made use of as the only Syllogisms to batter its Fortifications: when it is not only contemned and derided, but the Professors of it severely handled, and those that dare be so bold as to own it, put to most cruel Torments: when the Floods of Ungodliness threaten to overwhelm it, and the Malice of Men rises to that height, that nothing will serve their turn, but its Ruine and Destruction. Such was the *Massacre* of the Jews under *Antiochus*, when to live up to the Law of *Moses*, was present Death, and to observe Gods Statutes the readiest way to be Tortured, when to believe in one God was to be broken on the Wheel; and to abhor *Idolatry* involved the Votary in the danger of most barbarous Usage. Thus was the true Religion treated in the first ten Persecutions by the Heathen *Emperours*, when to have a Bible in the House, and to be thrown

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to the Lyons was all one, and not to offer Incense to the Heathen Gods, was cause enough to be torn in pieces by Bears and Tygers ; when Multitudes of Christians were driven like so many Sheep to the Slaughter, and the Hangmen were sooner tired with Executing, than the Professours of Christ's Doctrine with the variety of their Tortures. Thus the Church of *Rome* dealt with the *Waldenses* and *Albigenses*, from the Year of Our Lord 1334. to 1340. and upward, when those innocent Creatures for contradicting the Corruptions of that Church, were hurled into the Fire ; and not to be subject to the Pope in his unlawful Decrees, was counted as bad as Witchcraft ; when Flames were the Portion of Men, that would not believe a *Purgatory*, and a Dungeon the Reward of adhering close to the Oracles of the Holy Ghost.

Such was the Massacre at *Paris* in the Year 1572. when in one Night many thousands were Murther'd for no other reason, but because they were Protestants : and vast numbers of Men and Women Murthered like Beasts, because they would make the Bible the only Rule of their Faith and Manners, when at *Rome* they triumphed at the Inhumane Fact, and like the *Jews*, thought they had done God Service by sacrificing the lives of his Servants to their Rage and Malice. This was the lot of the Protestants in *Ireland* in the Year 1641. when 200000 of them were destroy'd to make the Popish Clergy sport, and Men that professed themselves to be of the *Catholick* Church out-did *Indians* and *Cannibals* in their Cruelty ; when the more Protestants a Papist killed, the more he Merited, and might tell the Pearls of his Crown in Heaven, not by his Beads, but by the number of *Christs* Disciples, which as he thought, he had sent to Hell, and offered to the Devil.

If

If God takes care of any thing, thinks the sensual Man, it must be of the true Religion, this we must conceive to be his Darling, and if he hath more tender Affections for one thing than another, this we must suppose is the chief Object of his sollicitude : This makes most for his Honour, and his Glory is advanced by nothing so much as by true, and genuine Worship ; This therefore he must be thought to mind and cherish most, and to look upon with the kindest Aspect : But to see this Jewel scorned, derided, affronted, and its lustre darkened by Clouds of Ignorance and Malice : To see this Pearl broken, shattered, and the dust of it dispersed into the various corners of the Earth : To see its Foes live great, and those that touch this Apple of his Eye, brave it in their pleasures : To see them erect their Throne on the Necks of Gods Servants, and securely trample on these supposed Favourites of Heaven ; what can we conclude, but that either this is not the true Religion, or that Providence is careless, and supine in its Protection ?

5. Such another Disorder is, *Base and contemptible mens climbing up to the Thrones of Kings, and displacing the true Owners, and usurping their Authority* ; When the vilest of Men are advanced to Royalty, and they that were but Subjects a little before, come to sit in their Lords Tribunal : vvhen Persons of the Dregs of the People get up to the highest Povver, and they that vvere but Scum before, come to svvim like Oyl on the top, and throw dovvn Gods Anointed ; when a *Jeroboam* from Surveyor of the Kings Works, rises up to be King himself ; and a *Zimri* that dvvelt in a Cottage before, comes to possess himself of the Royal Palace.

Such vvvas the sudden advance of the Famous or rather Infamous *Massinello*, vvho from a Fisherman, in a day or tvvo comes to be a Prince, and from mending of Nets,

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in a Weeks time is advanced to be more than *Vice-Roy of Naples*, whose contemptible Condition is on a suddain changed into Adorations, and his Converse with the meanest of his fellow Subjects, turned into bows and cringes from the greatest of the People : he that before had scarce a Dog to attend him, in a few hours is followed by a Crowd, and receives the Courtships and Caresses of an incredible Multitude : he that knew little but Obedience a little before, now Commands Armies, and from a Slave, comes to give Law to the proudest of the *Spaniards*. They that before would scarce vouchsafe to look upon him, now are glad of his kinder Smiles : and his threats, that before were accounted little more than the noise of a Hound, are now dreaded more than the Almighty's Thunder.

Such was the prodigious rise of the late Usurper, whose Crimes, and wonderful Successes in his Bloody Attempts, have given occasion to the sad Solemnity, and the Sackcloth, and Ashes of this Day. A Man, (if it be not a Crime to call him so, for he outwent Devils in Hypocrisy) by whose contrivance the Royal Crown fell down, and with the Crown the Church, and with the Church the Nations happiness : a Man, whose Crimes must be detested while time is measured by the intervals of Day and Night, and who by his Actions hath fixed such a blot on Christianity, as perhaps the Tears of many Ages cannot wipe away : a Man, who in pursuance of his Dreams was restless, till he saw what the Evil Spirit had revealed, accomplished ; and first poisoned the Peoples Loyalty, and then made advantage of their Perfidiousness.

Who made Religion a Stalking-horse to invade the Throne, and when he had possessed himself of it, was more lawless than the Person, whom he pretended to expel

expel for being so ; Who forced his way to Greatness through a thousand lives, and knowing no means to arrive to it, but injustice in the highest degree, cut down all the Trees that stopt his Prospect ; who made the Bible subservient to his Sword, and held it in one Hand, that he might only do greater Execution with the other ; who under a pretence of Liberty, made the Nation a greater Slave to him than they are in *Turky*, and while he gave out, that he would set them free, bound them but the faster in their Shackles : who to reform the Church, pulled it down to the Ground, and while he made Purity the Watch-word, brought in darkness greater than the *Egyptian* ; for he taught Men a new Religion, how they might be Devout and yet Rob and Steal, and commit Sacrilege without fear, or Remorse of Conscience : who in the worst sence became all things to all Men, to make them all his Prey, and complied with several Parties, to make them all his Devoted Vassals ; who could weep to deplore the Misfortunes of the Time, while he was the chief Instrument to bring them in ; and cry out against Monarchy, while nothing less was the Object of his Ambition ; who waved the Title of a King meerly because he saw it was not safe, and seemed Humble, thereby the better to compass his dangerous Designs and Purposes.

Who to stop the Clamours of the People, did them right, thereby to wrong his Prince the better : and to make his Murther Legal, caused him to be condemned by a Law of his own making : who first promoted the Parliaments Independency of the King, and then made himself Independent of their Power : who first gulled the simpler Party into an opinion of his sanctity, and when he had done so, wallow'd securely in the shades of the greatest Villany : who made himself great, by
daring

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daring to do that, which Heathens would have trembled at, and so his Glory might be set on the Pillars of Fame, was content to make *Lucifer* both his *Instrument* and *General*.

Thus lived the proud *Usurper*, but what is more, died in his Bed, lamented by the Crew that had served him in his Sins, disposed of three Kingdoms to his Son, who wanted besides Right, his Fathers Cunning, and Personal Qualifications; yet he saw his Successor applauded, and fawned upon by Men that were then in Power, and had the satisfaction to behold a Man of his own Line in a probability to carry on his own Usurped Authority, which was all that a dying Tyrant could desire, and greater felicity a Man could not possibly aim at, that believed no other Life, or if he did, could not expect a share in its Happiness: yet with his Death his Hellish Laurels did not wither, for his Funeral was Royal, as if it had not been enough to have lived a King, except he died so too, and the pomp of his Interrment such, as attracted the Eyes of the most curious Spectators; Nay, as after the Storm is past, there remains some agitation of the Waves, so the Agents of Foreign Princes, that had dreaded this *Neptunes* Trident, while alive, retained some awe of his Power after Death, which was the reason, that with their forced presence they graced his affected Funeral: An Accident uncommon, and exceeding rare; and if *Asaph* seeing the Prosperity of private wicked Men, his Feet had almost slipp'd, and he very near sunk into a slight Opinion, and low thoughts of Gods Providence, what would he have said, had he seen Impiety thus publickly honoured, not only in Life, but in Death, as if Heaven had applauded the *Heroick* Sin, and loved to bestow Rewards on Men; not only for their
great

great Attempts in Vertue, but for daring to be more than ordinarily Profane and Impious?

But as great as these Disorders are, or seem to be, they are no blemish of Providence, nor doth that Golden Chain look the less lovely, because all the Links are not distinctly seen by Men, whose Eyes by staring upon Sensual Objects, as People that look much on Snow, have contracted a vicious dimness. And so much will appear from what we shall propose in the second General, viz.

2. *Why God suffers such Disorders and Confusions to happen in Commonwealths or Kingdoms.*

1. *God doth it to punish a Nation or People for their Sin.* When the Sins of a People are come to a fatal pitch, and the measure grown full, it's time for God, by sending such Disorders to lash the generality into better Manners; not that God doth instigate them to these Disorders, but it's just with him to withdraw his restraining Grace, and not to hinder their wicked Inclinations: And when the Prop that upholds the House is Charity, and that Charity is abused, if the Prop be removed, and the House fall, it's to make the Inhabitant sensible of his ingratitude. When Pride and Idleness, and fulness of Bread, and its usual Concomitants, Wantonness and Luxury come once to Rage and Reign, God justly takes away the Partition that kept the Fire and Tinder asunder, and then no marvel, if being committed and let loose to fall one upon the other, they cause a Combustion which is not easily quenched.

When the Body is grown Pletharick, and the Humours abound, the Wise Physician breaths a Vein, and though the ignorant Spectator thinks he is going to let out Life, yet it's only to preserve the whole from perishing. God sometimes afflicts a good King for his wicked

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wicked Peoples sake, so he permitted the Excellent *Josiah* to be Slain, because though himself was one of the best of Men, yet his Subjects were Hypocritical to a high degree; and while they seemed to comply with the King in the true Worship of God, continued Idolaters in their Hearts: So God suffered the *Martyr of the day* to fall, because the Nation that lived under his Shadow, were grown extravagant in their Manners. And that you may not wonder, how God comes to punish the Innocent, and let the Guilty go free, I must answer, That the Innocent, though seemingly Afflicted, yet lose nothing by the Adversity, but only Anticipate Heaven, and exchange their Temporal for an Everlasting Bliss a few years sooner, while the Sinners, though seemingly prosperous, suffer signally in the loss of their great *Representative*; for hereupon they must necessarily fall into confusion, and while they send sometime to the *Vine*, and sometime to the *Fig-tree* to Reign over them, and know not where to fix, they at last inconsiderately, yet by Gods wise Permission, fix upon the *Bramble* for their Prince, whence Fire comes forth, and either Disperses or Consumes the giddy Multitude.

Sometimes God punishes the *People*, for their *Irreligious Princes* sake, as he sent a Famine on the Land in the days of *David*, 2 *Sam.* 21. 1. because King *Saul* had committed Perjury, and Slain the *Gibeonites*: And so he would not depart from his anger against the *Jews*, because of the Sins of *Manasseh*, 2 *Kings* 23. 26. where with he had provoked him to anger: For Kingdoms are Bodies Politick, whereof Princes are the Heads, and if either Head or Body be put to streights and inconveniencies, the design of Providence is fulfilled, which is resolved, when heinous Offences are committed in the whole, one principal part should smart for the boldness, that

that the other may take warning: and though that which suffers may not be so guilty as the other, yet as they sympathize together, so its seldom seen but that they do contract something, or participate of one anothers Corruptions, and consequently, justly share in one anothers Sufferings: And where the Prince suffers for the People, though it's confest, the Providence is more astonishing and surprizing, yet it is more Godlike and Majestick, and an imitation of the Death of *Jesus*, who consented to die for the People, that the whole Nation might not be undone.

God never punishes a Nation as a Nation, but only in this present Life; for indeed that relation extends no farther: when People in the next, come to be judged before the great Tribunal, they are not judged as a Nation, but as single Persons; for every one shall give an account of himself to God; and therefore if God Chastises a Nation as a Nation, it is only in this World, and if in such Chastisements, either the generality or some Principal Members suffer, its enough to answer the design of the Divine Equity, which is to let the Nation see his displeasure against the cursed thing that is in the midst of them; so that in this case, the Almighty uses a kind of *Decimation*, he being too pitiful, and too great a lover of Humane Societies to destroy every individual, especially in Ample Commonwealths, *wherein are more than Sixscore thousand Persons, that cannot discern between their right hand and their left*, Jon. 4. 11. But,

2. *As in all these Disorders and Confusions, there are some, who though notoriously guilty, yet escape, and are not so much as singed by that devouring Fire, nay, prosper, and thrive best in such Combustions: so Providence lets them go free, to convince Men of Reason, that there is*

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another World, where their insolence and unrighteousness shall be punished with a witness, Psal. 50. 21, 22, 23. God gives Men a taste of his Justice here, that they may not think in their hearts, there is no God; and yet but a taste, that they may not imagine, that what he doth here, is all he intends to do. Some Judgments he is obliged to send down now, to let the World see, there is a God that judges in the Earth; and yet he sends not all he means to send, to teach them, there are far more dreadful ones to come. Some careless and debauched Men he lashes here, to hint to us, that there is an All-seeing Eye; and yet others he lets alone, to assure us, that there is a future and Everlasting Vengeance.

There is not a greater Argument of another Life, than Gods being silent now, and not Executing Judgment against an Evil Work speedily; especially, where the Crimes threaten Omnipotence, and Men attempt to mingle Heaven and Earth together, dare be Giants in Transgression, and make Gods Patience an encouragement to their Irreligion: for God, being a Righteous Governour, cannot but be just; and since he awakes not to Vengeance here, he will certainly pay the Sinner home with interest hereafter.

When *Frederick* the Emperor heard of a Nobleman in his Dominions, who had run through all the Fallacious Labyrinths of Sin, tasted of all its Luxuries, lived the life of a Beast, or of a Devil rather, *had spared no Woman in his lust, and no Man in his anger*, had been Drunk and Intemperate to a prodigy, yet had never had any Cross or Sickness, and at last Died softly and quietly without pain or trouble, with Age more than with Sickness, being then above Fourscore; The Intelligent Prince smote upon his Breast, and said, *Either there is no God, or after this comes a Life of Reward and*
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Vengeance: concluding peremptorily, That this Man having escaped Gods Rods and Axes here, must necessarily be Tormented hereafter.

So that Prosperous Villains are Gods Witnesses, that Men do not cease to be when they Die, and carry Marks about them of Gods future Vengeance. God in suffering them to thrive, confirms what he hath said in his Word, and their Flourishing Condition here, is an item, that when this Life is ended, they shall be destroy'd forever; which is a Truth so important, and which the World is so highly concerned to know, that it is in a manner necessary, Impiety should be prosperous here, that their strength should be firm, and there should be no Bands in their Death, that they should not be in trouble as other Men, nor plagued like other Men, that their Eyes should stand out with fatness, and that they should have more than their hearts can wish, since it is an infallible Argument, that *God hath appointed a day, wherein he will render Tribulation and Anguish to every Soul that doth evil, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile,* Rom. 2. 9.

3. Such Disorders come to convince Men, that true Happiness is not to be had in this Valley of Tears, but must be sought in Heaven. To this end the greatest Glories in the VWorld are subject to decay, and Scepters and Diademes are suffered to tumble down, to shew, there is a greater felicity to be gotten elsewhere. To this end the greatest Calm is suffered to die into a Storm, and *Halcyon* days into threatening VVaves and Billows, to assure us the Prophet was in theright, when he cried, *Arise and depart, for here is not your rest,* Mic. 2. 10.

To this end *Gilimer* the *Vandal* was overcome, and led in Triumph through the Streets of *Constantinople*; To this end, *Andronicus* from an Emperor is made a Slave,

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and infamously dragged through Common-shores and Kennels; To this end the Great *Vitellius* hath Dirt thrown in his Face, and is haled to the Market-place to be Executed; To this end the Mighty *Cræsus* is like to fall a Sacrifice to Flames, and the Sturdy *Bajazet* is imprisoned in a Cage: King *Boleslaus* made a Skullion, and *Dionysius* forced to turn Schoolmaster; To this end *Valerianus* is Flead by the *Persian* Souldiers, and Salted as if he had been Bacon; To this end *John* the Twenty third, though a Pope, is at last constrained to eat his own Clothes, and to feed upon the Flesh of his own Arms, for hunger; To this end *Adonibezeck* after the Conquest of Seventy Kings, hath the extremities of his Hands and Feet cut off, and all to teach Men, that these outward Gaudes are *vanity of vanities, all is vanity.*

And indeed the aforesaid *Gilimer* was so sensible of this, that being after long, but fruitless Resistance necessitated to yield himself to the Enemy, sent to his Conqueror for three things, for *Bread*, for a *Spunge*, and for a *Cittern*: for *Bread* to support his fainting Body, for a *Spunge* to wipe away the Tears, he had shed for the loss of his Royal Grandeur, and for a *Cittern*, to rejoyce in his Experience that all is vanity.

The fickleness of these outward Glories is an Argument of their emptiness, and in that like Glasses, they are so easily broke and crackt, Wise Men see, that they are but bubbles; were they lasting, Men would fancy them to be Heaven, and their uninterruptedness would tempt poor Mortals to say of them, as the surpriz'd Disciple of Mount *Tabor*, *It's good for us to be here, let's make Tabernacles.* Indeed in the midst of their inconsistency, Men are apt to promise themselves substantial satisfaction: and while they see them slip through their
Fingers,

Fingers, they are so unwise as to adore them ; What would they do, were they really what they seem to be, and had they beside their dazling Dress, Eternal duration to make them amiable ?

God hath laid up other Felicities for Rational Creatures, and they lie out of the Common Road, that Men might take pains to get them. We must not think God bestow'd Immortal Souls upon us, that we might fix them on Sensual Objects, and when we find, that they are capable of securing such Riches and Pleasures as fade not away, we must suppose, that to do so, was the principal End of their Creation. God hath made these lower things changeable as the Moon, that like the Woman in the *Revelation, chap. 12. vers. 1.* we may set our Feet upon them, and aim at Delights which transport Souls, ravish Angels, and force Seraphim into Extasies.

The deceitfulness of outward Glories appears no where so plain, as in publick Disorders and Confusions, and they are the best Glass to shew us, what unsatisfactory things they are ; For though in private Families disappointments and changes happen every day, yet they are too inconsiderable for a Multitude to take notice of them ; but Publick Disorders convince a Kingdom of the Imperfection of these External Comforts, and the more notorious they are, the more all sorts of Men are persuaded into a belief of that Imperfection ; so that Confusions of this nature are Sermons preach'd to a whole Nation, and Speeches from Heaven, whereby God intends an Universal Reformation.

4. *Sometimes it is to try the Good, and to brighten their Faith, and Hope, and Constancy,* which like Gold, is best Polished and Refined by Fire. And this Reason God himself gives, *Pf. 81. 7.* It is in this case, as in matter of Heresies, which *must be, That those which are approved,*
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may be made manifest, 1 Cor. 11. 19. To adhere to a good Cause, when it sleeps under the soft Wings of Peace and order, may be Policy, but to espouse it when discouraged, is an argument of true Honesty and Ingenuity. He that can defend it, when it meets with Opposition, we may conclude, is guided more by its Equity, than his own Interest : and he that sticks to it, when Tempests threaten to overwhelm it, discovers, that it hath not only his bare Approbation, but his Heart and Affections too.

To Salute Christ when all *Jerusalem* cries *Hosannah*, may be a piece of Civility ; but to speak for him when he is Crucified, is a sign of true Christian Simplicity. Till Persecution came, the Son of God had innumerable Flatterers ; but when that Fire began, the number soon dwindled away into a small Company of Followers. It happens so sometimes, that the good cannot be distinguished from the counterfeit Professors of Religion, and while all meet in the Publick Assemblies, the Wheat and Chaff seem to be one, but Troubles and Disorders like the Wise *Shepherd* make a distinction between the Sheep and the Goats, and discover the Integrity of the one, and the Deceit and Hypocrisie of the other. To follow *David*, when all *Israel* runs after *Abshalom*, is a Mark of Loyalty, but with *Achitophel* to shrink, when Heaven seems to frown on the right side, is base Treachery. Troubles, like *Aqua Fortis*, make a separation betwixt Metals, and shew which is the Silver, and which the contemptible Mineral. Those that are good grow better by them : Those that seem only to be so, in the hour of Temptation fall away.

That Sap certainly is strongest, which preserves the Leaves of a Tree green and verdant all the Winter, and nothing is so great a sign of strength and hardiness, as
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to be able to endure the rude assaults of Frost and Snow, and unseasonable Weather. It's a Character of Infamy, the Evangelist imprints on the chief Rulers among the *Jews*, who indeed believed in *Jesus*, but for fear of the *Pharisees*, durst not confess him, *Joh. 12. 42.* True Goodness like Lillies thrives, though Thorns and Bryars do surround it, and *Salamander* like can live in Fire.

The *late Kings* Piety shines the brighter, because he durst maintain it under Temptations to forsake it. The Troubles that came upon him, it's confess'd added little to his outward Pomp, but rendred his Goodness more charming and amiable to the Prudent Spectator: It had never arrived to that Renown and Glory, if those Confusions had not been the Touchstone: and when like Lawrel it could stand those Thunders, it was evident that an Almighty Power did uphold it: Had he lived Prosperously all his days, his Vertue would have made him a Saint, but the constancy of it in the severest Tryals, gave him the Character of a Martyr: Had he profess'd and express'd Meekness, while his Subjects were submissive and respectful, the excellent Qualification might have challenged suitable Commendations; but to practice it when his Servants became his Masters, and instead of Honouring, loaded him with Indignities and Reproaches, this deserves our wonder: To be true to the Church against his Temporal Interest, was that, which gave him the greatest Credit, and to forgoe a Crown rather than part with his Religion, an act which force the World into admiration. The greater Man he was, the greater was the Tryal, and for such a Tryal, perhaps, nothing was so fit as Royal Vertue. The Disorders he lived to see, made him more sensible of Gods assistance, than all his Sunshine did, and he had never tasted of that degree of sweetness in Gods favour, if Persecution and a Prison had

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had not increased the relish. This gave him a clearer sight of Gods goodness, than the high *Specula* of his Palace, and his Solitariness afforded him such Contemplations, as he must never have hoped for in the Crouds of *Courtiers*. This made him look into *Paradise*, and see the Suffering *Jesus* on his Throne, and taught him, that a Man might be the Son of God in the very Garden of *Gethsemane*. This furnished him with Lessons, which the greatest Kings are Strangers to, and with *Moses*, directed him to behold him that was Invisible. This made his Faith with *Abraham*, believe even Contradictions, and raised his Confidence, that though he Died, he should live for ever. This made him stand amazed at his own Vertue, and while he saw he was able to do, what he thought had been impossible, admire the immense power and goodness of God, when grace was thus sufficient for him, and made his strength proportionable to his burden. This made him find by blessed experience, what the Saints of old felt in their Chains and Tortures, and assured him, that to rejoyce with joy unspeakable, and full of glory in the midst of Flames, was no Fable. This made him see, that the things Invisible are the most desirable Objects, and find with the great Apostle, that there is a great difference between being Persecuted and forsaken.

5. Such Disorders are sometimes permitted to discover the ill Principles of some Mens Religion, who are like to seduce others by their specious Pretences, that Men who are in good earnest resolved to be saved, may be aware of them, and not fall into the same condemnation, 2 Tim. 3. 1, 5, 9. Men who suppose that gain is godliness, when troublesome and Perillous times do come, and Disorders rise, serve themselves of these Tumults, and under a shew of Piety, grasp what they can, and betray their Carnal Ends,

Ends, which in such times cannot be hid, when there are opportunities and temptations to call them out into Action; for as in such Disorders commonly the Right Cause, or the Party that have most Justice on their side, are oppressed and come by the worst, so the other make advantage of their Misery, and their Blood and Tears give the other Growth and Stature. It's possible, *Beloved Hearers*, you may remember times, when Men walked in Sheeps Cloathing, but within were Ravening Wolves, and while their Voice was exactly like *Jacobs*, their Hands continued rough as *Esaus*'s; when Men cried, The Temple of the Lord, and yet at the same time Murthered those that opposed their Insolencies, and talked of the good Cause, while they meant nothing else by it, but enriching their own Purses; when Men pretended a thorough Reformation, and made their own Souls as black as Hell, and gave out that they fought for God, when it was only to maintain, what they had unjustly purchas'd; when Men sighed and groaned to get the Prey into their Net, and laboured much for a Spiritual Kingdom, to make a surer settlement of their Temporal Possessions.

When Men under a shew of seeking a World to come, did what they could to enjoy this present, and left no Stone unturned to Establish Religion, that thereby they might Establish themselves the better in their Unrighteous Acquits; when Men to pull down Idolatry, as they called it, set up Robbery and Sacrilege in the room of it, and instead of doing things better than they had been, exchanged only one Sin for another; when Men call'd that Zeal, which was in good earnest nothing else, but inordinate Passion, and termed that Charity, which was no more but Kindness to their Brethren in Iniquity; when Men called others Dumb Dogs,

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that they might more securely Bark at them, and represented them as lazy Droans, that they might carry the Honey, those Bees had made, to their own Hives; when Men undertook to resolve Cases of Conscience, while themselves had seared their own, and under a pretence of taking Scruples out of other Mens Breasts, felt none for the monstrous Injuries they had been guilty of to their Neighbours; when Men gave out, they pittied the Divisions of the Church, while themselves were the Causes that began them, and talk'd of Works of Mercy, while they shew'd none to those they had turned out of their Livings; when they trampled on the Pride of Prelates with a greater of their own, and ran like mad from *Babylon* to be consumed in the Fire of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*.

So I have seen some gaudy Flowers arrayed more gloriously than *Solomon*, but when dismantled, have been nothing but unflavoury and unprofitable Stalks; so the deadly *Night-shade* looks fresh and green, as other Plants, but carries Poison in its Bowels; so the Prince of Precious Stones, the *Diamond*, by its Rayes, promises so many Springs of Light, but its Powder kills without Remedy; so *Gold* and *Silver* dazle the Eye, yet are no Steams more odious or loathsome, than those which rise from the Mines, they are digg'd out of; so the *Butterfly* is striped with several Paints, yet is no more but a squallid Animal; so the *Glow-worm* looks like a creeping Star, yet if you behold it by day light, it is a very homely Creature.

These are the true Emblemes of some Mens Religion in the World, and their partial Obedience in times of Disorder and Confusion, tells the Considerate part of Mankind, that what they profess is *Varnish* not *Substance*, *Glass* not *Natural Chrystal*, *Shadow* not *Reality*; for how
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can that be true Religion, where I give to God the things which are Gods, and deny to Caesar the things which are Caesars? where I am conscientious to the Creator, and unjust and perfidious to the Creature? where I offer Sacrifice, and envy my Brother in my heart? where I express love to my Maker, and yet do not give all their due, Custom to whom Custom; Tribute to whom Tribute, Fear to whom Fear, and Honour to whom Honour; or in St. Peters Phrase, Fear God, and do not Honour the King?

And these Sophistications God commonly discovers in Confusions, intending them as Sea-marks, to give warning to the Ships that see them afar off, not to come near those Sands, lest they split their Vessel, and lose their Goods, which with great cost and labour they have purchased. But it's time we proceed, and enquire,

3. *How Gods Providence appears in these Disorders and Confusions.*

1. *God puts bounds and limits to the rage of Men, that cause and encourage those Disorders.* The proud *Senacharib*, *Esf.* 37. 24. talks big, he had already put *Jerusalem* into Consternation, and boasted of greater mischiefs he intended; *By the multitude of my Chariots*, saith he, *am I come up to the heights of the Mountains, to the sides of Lebanon, and I will cut down the tall Cedars thereof, and the choice Fir-trees thereof, and I will enter into the height of his Border, and the Forest of his Carmel.* But he that sits in Heaven laughs at him, and the great *Jehovah* derides the little talking Insect, assures the Prophet, that beyond such a Field he shall not step, and as he saith, he doth; *Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way which thou comest.* When *Maxentius* had filled Rome

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with Murthers, and the People feared not only greater Injuries to their Persons, but a total Desolation, (so great was the fury of the Monster) the Almighty sets bounds to his brutish Courage, and sends the great *Constantine* to remove him, and with him the Yoak, he had laid on the trembling People. And thus hath God dealt with most Tyrants, who have thought to crush the World by their Power, when they have threatned Heaven it self, and gone on securely for a considerable time, insomuch that they have flattered themselves, that all was their own, an Invisible hand hath stopt their Progress, and allotted them their limits, *Hitherto shalt thou come and no farther.*

And this hath been Gods method with the most Pestilent Hereticks, whose business it hath been to ruine the Church, and to render it, as the first Mass, a *חור ובור* or a thing without shape or Figure; Not only *Arrius* himself was stopt from belching out Blasphemies against the Son of God, by being struck with a fatal Loosness before he could reach the *Council*, but his Heresie too, when the World was afraid of its Inundation: for after such a term of years, the true Religion flourished again maugre all the opposition, from *Constantius*, *Valens*, and the *Goths* and *Vandals*.

2. *Sometimes God disappoints such Men in their highest hopes and expectations.* Benhadad sends to King *Ahab*, to tell him, *1 Reg. 20. 3. Thy Silver and thy Gold is mine, thy Wives also and thy Children, even the goodliest are mine, and accordingly dispatches his Servants to take their choice of what they liked. Ahab gives the Messengers a resolute denial, at which the Syrian storms and swears, v. 10. The Gods do so unto me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls, for all the People that follow me; Hereupon he marches with two and thirty Kings*

Kings, his Vassals at his Heels, and hearing that some of the *Israelites* were come out against him, he scorns to fight with them, but like a God, at whose nod People must either live or die, bids his men take them alive: But behold how the *Phantastick King* is disappointed in his hopes, while he thought all *Samaria* would come out to him with Ropes and Halters about their Necks to acknowledge his Sovereign Power of Life and Death, he and his vast Armies, which filled the Land, are not only chased and beaten, but himself is taken Prisoner, and forced to come crouching and cringing to the King of *Israel*.

Selimus the Turk in the year of our Lord 1569. sets out from *Constantinople* with 25000 Horse, and 3000 *Janizaries*, and joins an Army of the *Precopian Tartars* consisting of 80000 Horse more, besides a Navy at Sea of 150 Gallies Manned, and provided of suitable Ammunition to Invade the Kingdom of *Astracan*; he had already swallowed the *Empire* in his hopes, distributed the various Provinces to his *Basba's*, and consulted how to govern the Kingdom, conquer'd already in Imagination. It's true, the Inhabitants of *Astracan* were in great confusion, but the Mighty God, who sets up one, and pulls down another, comes in, dashes all the swelling hopes of the haughty *Sultan*, and beyond expectation, all that mighty Army pines and dwindles away in their march, some of them come as far as *Azeph*, and of that vast Multitude 2000 only return to *Constantinople*. *Vitiges* the Goth besieges *Rome*, makes use of all the Stratagems, that his wisest and cunningest Men can think of, and doubts not of success, but in despite of all these contrivances, he is forced to retire, and acknowledge a Providence. The *Spaniards* in the famous year 1588. set out their Invincible Armada against England, fright the
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Inhabitants of the Land with their Titles and Numbers, and promise themselves a perfect Victory, but on a suddain that vast Navy is scattered and torn, and only a few Ships return home to bring King *Philip* the News, that the rest were lost, insomuch that the *Spaniards* thought, that God was become a *Lutheran*.

So unexpectedly doth God change the Scene of Affairs in such Disorders. The *Amalekites* plunder *Ziklag*, 1 *Sam.* 30. and then sit down and play, and praise their Gods for the Conquest, while *David* and his Men are almost distracted with fear and grief. On a suddain, the Clouds clear up, God directs them to the Camp, where the Enemy lay, secure of his Prey, The Foe is beaten, and *David* recovers all, v. 17, 18, 19. *Theodosius* provoked by *Eugenius* the Tyrant, Encamps against him; The Enemies numbers and valour fright the *Emperors* Men, who look'd upon themselves, as lost; But behold *Theodosius* prays, and on a suddain a mighty Wind arises, insomuch that the Enemy is forced to turn his back, and yield. So in *Aurelius* his Army, when those vast numbers of Men were ready to die for thirst, the *Christian Legion* calls upon God, and on a suddain the Heavens brake forth in Lightning and Rain, the Tumults among the Souldiers are stilled, and all drink, and are refreshed by Gods kindly Showers.

3. Sometimes God works a mighty deliverance from such Disorders by very inconsiderable means. What misery there was in *Samaria* in the time of that dire Famine, we read of, 2 *Reg.* 6. 25, 28, 29. any one may guess that hath felt the straits of Hunger; that in one day there should be so great a change, that a Measure of Fine Flower should be sold for a *Shekle*, one of the Kings Servants thought to be a thing so impossible, that he ventured to say, if God should rain down Corn from Heaven, it could

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not be, yet it happened so as the Prophet had said, and the deliverance was effected by four inconsiderable *Lepers*, who despairing of life, fled to the *Syrian Camp*, and found such affluence and plenty, that all *Samaria* was immediately relieved and stored with Provision; Thus was the *Roman Capital* saved by Geese, and the *Roman Army* chased by *Poisoned Birds* from the *Parthian Walls*; Thus the young *Corvinus* beat the *Gauls* with the help of a *Raven*; And *Immo Henry* the Emperors General was delivered from the danger threatned him by *Gisilbert* of *Lorrain*, by *Swarms* of *Bees* let loose upon the Enemy, which Strung both Horse and Rider, and made them unfit for Action; Thus *Fridlevo* the *Dane's Army* was saved by a *Dog*; And *Hannibal* got a signal Victory over *Eumenes* by the help of *Serpents*.

The more inconsiderable the means are whereby deliverances are effected, the more they proclaim the Divine Power and Providence; and when *Gideon* conquers a numberless Host of the *Midianites* with three hundred Men, it's a sign, the Lord of Hosts hath a hand in it. That *Sampson* smites a thousand *Philistines* with the Jawbone of an Ass, shews that God governed his Arm; and when *Jonathan* and his Armour-bearer make the *Philistines* flee, it's an Argument, that the Lord reigned in the midst of the frights and fears, which possessed the cowardly *Israelites*. If Men believe it not, it is because they do not consider the weakness of the Instruments upon such occasions, and the only thing that makes them Infidels, is, because they conclude not from the contemptibleness of the means, that there must be a higher Power, which gives them Strength and Vertue.

4. Sometimes God causes Divisions and Dissentions to arise among the Prevailing Party, that were the cause of such Disorders, that they may fall into great Disasters and Misfortunes.

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fortunes. Abimelech, *Judg.* 9. sets upon his Brethren, threescore and ten Persons, Murthers them all, and fills the City of *Shechem* with Confusion ; Things go on merrily, and he fears no evil, but when he had Reigned, saith the Sacred Writer, *v.* 23. Three years over *Israel*, God sent an Evil Spirit between Abimelech and the men of *Shechem*, and the Men of *Shechem* dealt treacherously with *Abimelech*, which proved both his and their undoing, *v.* 40. 54. As great as their Friendship was before, God doth but pull out a Pin, that held them together, and the whole Frame breaks in pieces, and while they see no Foreign Power to revenge their former wickedness, themselves are made the Instruments to do it. God in this case made use of the Law of Retaliation, and the Judgment that came upon them was suitable to their Sin. *Ephraim's* Righteousness, *Hof.* 6. 4. is as the Morning Cloud, and as the early Dew it passes away, Therefore themselves shall be as a Morning Cloud, and as the early Dew they shall pass away, *Hof.* 13. 3. so these Men had sown Divisions, and Dissentions among the People, at last their Sin becomes their Punishment, and that which before had been their delight and pleasure, proves in the end their Yoak and Burthen ; They divide themselves, and are lost.

This was the case of the *Arcadians*, *Troezenians*, and *Thessalonians* of old, and hath been re-acted in our days ; for though such Jealousies and Dissentions seem to come by chance, yet there is nothing more certain, than that God thereby visits the Sins of those, that have been the causes of Publick Disorders and Confusions ; and when those, who have assisted them in their attempts, begin to suspect either their Fidelity or Honesty, and thereupon plot, how to remove the Mushrooms, they have raised, its Providence disposes their hearts to it ; not
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that he, who is of Purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity, prompts them to Sin, but justly sends blindness on their Minds, whereby their Eyes become dim to their Interest, and they tempted to undermine their own Foundations.

5. Sometimes God so orders it, that the Authors of such Confusions shall hearken to ill Counsel, whereby they may be ruined. Ahab by the Prophets Testimony, was a Person, that signally troubled Israel, 1 Kings 18. 18. But behold how Providence deals with him. A fancy takes him, that he must needs go up, and Retake Ramoth Gilead out of the hands of the Syrians; yet before he adventures upon the Enterprize, he consults both with his Confederates and such Prophets as he had, whether the Expedition were safe or no. All but Micah advise him to it, and to this Advise he hearkens; but see, how Providence laid the Scene. I saw the Lord, saith Micah, 1 Kings 22. 19, 20, 21, 22. I saw the Lord sitting on his Throne, and all the Host of Heaven standing by him, on his right hand and on his left, and the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up, and fall at Ramoth Gilead? and one said on this manner, and another said on that manner, and there came forth a Spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him; And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying Spirit in the mouth of all his Prophets; and he said, thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also, go forth and do so; And so it came to pass, he was persuaded, went, and was Shot, and Died.

And though at this day, we see no such Visions as Micah did, yet we may justly imagine, when we see the same events, that they are compassed and effected the same way, i. e. by Gods permitting some Evil Spirit to put ill Counsel into the Heads of those, with whom such

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Firebrands Advise, that acting according to those Counsels, they may come to that woful End, which their Crimes and Follies do deserve. Were our Eyes quick enough to behold the Transactions and Consultations in the Kingdom of Spirits above us ; could we pry into their Secrets, Order, Proceedings, and Management of this lower World, we should be able to resolve a thousand *Phænomena*, and mysteries of Events, which now seem strange and uncouth to our darker understandings ; for on the Molehills of this World, where myriads of little Ants do run, those Spirits exercise their power, and that which we call Accidental, hath been, and is contrived by their deliberate Resolutions.

Thus we may suppose they acted, when *Rehoboam* follow'd the Counsel of his Young Men, and rejected the grave Advice of his Elder *Senators* ; the very cause of his succeeding danger. Thus they blinded the *Carians* of old, who rebelling against *Darius*, set up for themselves, but by neglecting the excellent Counsel of *Pixodorus*, were Conquer'd by the *Persians* ; Thus they deceiv'd the tumultuous *Athenians*, who following the dangerous Advice of *Aristagoras*, drew the fury of *Darius* upon them, and laid the Foundation of their Ruine. Thus they couzen'd that unwary and Seditious People, in their Conflicts with the *Lacedæmonians*, while they obliged them to hearken to *Cleophon*, who encouraged them to a vigorous prosecution of the War, of which they repented, when it was too late ; for they lost not only all their power and greatness, but became subject to domineering Tyrants, and lost all their ease, and conveniencies too. Thus the Seditious *Zedekiah* was served by them : Advised by *Jeremiah* the Prophet to yield himself to the *Chaldean Monarch*, and expect his Mercy ; he desperately hearkens to the turbulent Counsels of Men as vicious as himself, to stand

stand out against the *Babylonian Army*, which proved his overthrow, and the utter destruction of *Jerusalem*.

But still those Evil Spirits, as they are Gods *Executioners*, so they all must attend his Command and Order, and they cannot thus impose on Sinners here on Earth, till the Almighty gives them a Warrant for to do so: And he may do it, as he is the Judge of Heaven and Earth, and it's just he should do so, to lash the Insolencies of Men, that would confound Kingdoms or Societies.

6. Sometimes he sends upon Men, who are the Causes of such Disorders, a *Worm to gnaw their Breasts*, even a tormenting Conscience. Such a turbulent Spirit was *Passur* the Son of *Immer* the Priest, in the time of *Zedekiah*, a Man who set both the King and Nobles against the Prophet *Jeremiah*, whereupon God threatens him, to make him a terrour to himself, which without all peradventure came to pass, when *Nebuchadnezzar* took the City, *Jer. 20. 4.* So that when no visible Judgment appears in such Men, there is an Enemy many times within them, which frights them worse than all External Violence. *Cain*, who was the first that brought Disorder into the World, behold, how after his Brothers Murther his Conscience haunts him! Though there were no People in the World, but his nearest Relations, yet he fancies every place he goes to, full of Men and Enemies, and is afraid they'll kill him. *Tiberius*, who scarce let a day pass without some Villany, and seemed to be born to the Confusion of the *Roman State*, cries out, when no Man pursues him, trembles, when no Enemy is near him, and feels terrors within, while without, all seems to be calm and quiet.

Nero kills his Mother *Agrippina*, sets *Rome* on Fire, Persecutes the *Christians*, but what ails him? In the midst of his Guards he is frightened, fancies he sees dreadful shapes

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before him, feels Arrows in his Breast, while his Flatterers fawn upon him. *Constans* the *Grecian* Emperour, dispatches his Brother *Theodosius*, soon after he cannot sleep; What's the reason, was it Sicknels? Was it a fit of the Gout, or Stone, or Collick that troubled him? No, something within opens his Eyes, and shews him his Brothers Ghost, coming towards him with a Cup of Blood, and saying to him, *Drink inhumane Brother*; It was his wicked Conscience. *Theodorick* King of the *Goths* uses *Symmachus* very barbarously, and falls Sick upon it; Was it any disorder of the Blood? Was it a Surfeit? Was it a Fever that discomposed him? No, he sees a Fish opened, and sees *Symmachus* his Head in it, and having seen it, cannot put the strange sight out of his mind; his Conscience rolled and worked within, and drew the dismal Picture before his Eyes, and in such frightful colours, that in Torments of Mind he dies. Thus it happened to *Rudolphus*, that engaged in *Hildebrands* Faction against his Master *Henry* the 4th. Emperour; his Conscience tore him within, and the remembrance, how he had sworn an Oath of Allegiance to his Prince, and perfidiously broke it, lay upon his Spirits, and Rackt him, and in that Rack his polluted Soule expires. *Richard* the Third, who for some years had put *England* into Combustion, the Night before *Bosworth-Field*, in his Sleep sees all the Devils in Hell about his ears, ready to tear his cursed Soul away. Those Devils were the reflections of his Conscience, foreboding the Flames that waited for him in the black Kingdom of Infernal Furies; And if History and Fame doth not belie the late Usurper, for all his borrow'd Glories he slept but uneasie, and as soft as his Pillows were, something harder than Lead or Iron lay upon his Heart, which made him start in his Sleep, and betray an unruly Guest within, upon other occasions.

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This way God lets even the wickedest of Mankind know, not only that there is a living Justice, but that they do but get little by all their desperate Enterprizes; This way he makes them see, that there is no place so private, but he is present there, and that there is no design so intricate, but it's naked and open before him; This way they must come to know, that the darkness doth not hide from him, and that though no Creatures can reach them with their Eyes, they cannot abscond from the All-seeing one of the great Creator.

7. Such Disorders, *God not only designs, but manages for his Peoples good; for theirs is the promise, that all things shall work together for their advantage,* Rom. 8. 28. So great a lover is God of Holy Men, that though I will not say with the Jews, that for their sakes he Created the World, yet certainly for their sakes he preserves it, as much as he would for their sakes have spared *Sodom and Gomorrah*, had any tolerable number of them been found in those corrupted places; Nay, more than that, for their sakes he not only suffers Publick Disorders to arise, but when they arise, so directs and over-rules them, that they shall receive no small advantage by them. Do Men gather Grapes of Thorns, you will say, or Figs of Thistles? Can a Fountain at the same place send forth both bitter and sweet Water? Yes, here this seeming contradiction is true; and as great as the mischiefs are, that issue from such Confusions, the good God's Servants reap by them, is as remarkable; In Prosperity their Prayers are apt to slacken; In such Disorders, their Aspirations become loud and vehement, and whereas before a cloud of dulness and laziness hung upon their Spirits, now it's shaken off with scorn and indignation; Ease and Plenty made their Piety lukewarm, Disorders give them Fire, and Tumults make them look more carefully to their Souls.

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Souls. Their hatred of Sin before was sincere, may be, but such Confusions make them Zealous ; These make their Faith more lively, their Hope more vigorous, and their Love more fervent ; these whet their charity and confidence, and when the Storms are gone, make them not only relish their deliverance better, but engage them to greater gratitude.

But this is not all ; As Godliness hath the promise of this present Life, as well as that of a future, so the good that arises to Gods People from such Disorders, hath respect to their Temporal felicity too ; for this way a lasting Foundation many times is laid for their future Tranquility, and as Trees Shaken with the Wind, take the deeper Root, so these Disorders make way for a firmer settlement of their outward Peace and Plenty. By the troubles which happened to the *Israelites* in *Egypt*, they are fitted for a quiet settlement in the Land of *Canaan*, the Land that flow'd with Milk and Honey ; and whereas their Captivity lasted but 400, their possession of that promised Land continued at least 800 years. Thus the first Persecutions of the *Christian* Church under *Heathen Emperors* made way for their free enjoyment of the Comforts of this Life, after the Empire began to be *Christian*, and though it was now and then interrupted partly by the *Arrians*, and partly by *Julian the Apostate*, yet it settled again after a little while, upon its former Basis, and hath continued, at least in the West, unto this day ; And what we say of the Universal, is true also of particular Churches, whose Tranquillity by such Disorders comes to be more durable, as were an easie matter to instance in the Reformed *European* Churches, when they had for some time struggled under the Seditions and Tumults raised by the *Roman* Church ; and though I do not take all those, who are Members of a particular Re-

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formed and visible Church to be Gods true Servants, yet even they who are sincere, share in the Tranquility, Peace and Plenty, and Temporal Prosperity of the Church they are of, and consequently the Disorders which are suffered to arise, may reasonably be said to promote the durableness, even of their particular Prosperity.

Having thus asserted the Order, Regularity, and watchfulness of Gods Providence in the midst of Disorders and Confusions, it will not be proper to dismiss this Subject without some practical inferences;

1. *The Lord reigneth*; Let all Sinners tremble; Be afraid ye workers of Iniquity, there is a King above, who as patient as he is, will make you know ere long he hath a Trumpet of War, as well as a Scepter of Love. Good God! How little do Men regard thy Power and Revenging Arm! If they can but save themselves from the wrath of Men, and the lashes of the Law, how little are they concern'd at thy Indignation! Thou hast *Magazines* of Vengeance, *Store-houses* of Curses, and canst undo a thousand ways; Thou hast *Waters* to drown, *Fire* and *Brimston* to consume, *Arrows* to wound, *Pestilence* and *Famine* move by thy direction, nay, thou canst destroy both Soul and Body into Hell; Thou hast threatned desolation, and howling and gnashing of Teeth, outward darkness, and what is more, Fire, that is not quench'd, to Men that chuse rather to gratifie their sinful humours, than obey thy Laws; Yet they look not pale upon it, their colour changes not, they find no alteration in their dispositions, thy terrours fright them not, thy anger moves them not; how securely do they laugh and quaff, and sing fear and care away!

How Merry notwithstanding all this, is the Drunkard over his Cups! How unconcerned doth the Fornicator and Adulterer lie in the Embraces of his Harlot! How cheerfully doth the Covetous hug his Bags; and how boldly doth

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doth the Swearer send up his fearful Oaths to Heaven ! How undisturbed doth the Oppressour, Extortioner, and Murderer sleep ! and all because they think thou art Patient and Merciful : Thy Mercy makes them wanton, and thy Patience causes Sin to live in their Souls ; Thy Goodness tempts them to be foolish, and thy Compassion prompts them to affront thy Glory ; Thy Kindness proves their Bane, and the Meat thou givest them, encreases their Corruption ; Thy Oyl they turn into Poison, and thy Corn and Wine feeds them into contempt of thy Majesty ; The ease thou givest them, they make use of to fight against thy Laws, and the plenty, they enjoy by thy Providence, gives them courage to make War with that Heaven, from whence that plenty flows.

Monstrous Abuse ! Strange Stupidity ! When ever Gods Indignation breaks forth, how violent will the Torrent be ? Deluded Men ! what pains do you take to treasure up Wrath unto your selves ! Were there but the least spark of ingenuity in you, how durst you make Infinite goodness the Object of your scorn ! How could you find in your hearts, to declare your selves Rebels and Enemies to your greatest Benefactor ! Shall Goodness harden you, or Patience make your Breasts impenetrable ! Shall Bowels of Mercy make you hard as Rocks, and Compassion be the *Opiate* to lull you asleep in your follies ! If your Children served you so, what plagues would you think too big for them ! Or, if your Servants should recompence your kindneses thus, would not you hate the very sight of their Persons ! And must God put up affronts which you will not ! Must he be contented under scorns and abuses, which you will not bear ! Can such ingratitude be pleasing to him, which is so odious to you ! What conceptions do you entertain of God, that you deal with him thus ! If you believe him to be jealous of his Glory, Will not he vindicate these Injuries ? See how loath he is

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to punish you, and will you force him to it ! See how slowly he proceeds to Vengeance, and will you hasten him ! See how he waits for your Repentance, and will you make him despair of it ! He is Patient, because he would have you prevent the blow, and will you pull it down on your heads ! He delays his anger, because he would have you kiss the Son, and will you still fight against him, that you may perish in good earnest ! By your trespassing upon his Patience, you aggravate your guilt, and must necessarily aggravate your Condemnation too ; you make Mercy a Witness against you, and Gods goodness your Accuser, and are these Arguments to be Answered ! I mean, the Arguments, that the Mercy and Patience of God will alledge against you in the last day ; If you allow God but the ordinary Wisdom of a great Man, you must needs think, that his Mercies abused thus, will prove your Ruine. Doth not every Wise Man, if he have entrusted his Steward with an Estate, demand of him, how he hath employ'd it, and will not you allow God so much Wisdom, as to be concern'd about the Talents, he hath entrusted you withall ? His Mercy and Patience are those Talents, he gave you to improve into seriousness, and hatred of Sin, and resistance of Temptations, will you bury them under ground, or lay them up in a Napkin, or what is more, misuse them to dishonour the Omnipotent God, and his Law, and expect an *Euge* ? Will you turn his Grace into wantonness, and believe, you shall be applauded at last, with a *well done good and faithful Servant* ? Have not you read of the unprofitable Servant, that was deliver'd to the Tormentors, till he should pay what he ow'd ; and is not this your case, that make light of Gods anger, because he doth not power it out upon you, so soon, as your Sins deserve it ? *Therefore art thou inexcusable, O Man, whosoever thou art, who despisest the riches of his goodness, and forbearance,*

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and long-suffering, not knowing, that the goodness of God leads thee to Repentance, Rom. 2. 1, 5.

2. *The Lord reigneth*, Let's admire the Wisdom of God, who can draw light out of darkness, and wholsom Medicines from the rankest Poison; The brutish Man knows it not, neither doth a Fool understand this, and hence come the rash censures of Gods actions; A Man who is no careless observer of things, will find very strange and uncouth passages, and dispensations in this World, which possibly he cannot reconcile to the principles of that Reason, God hath given him; yet may he be confident, that as absurd as some Dispensations seem to him, they are carried on with singular Wisdom and Providence, by the Supream mover of all, it being impossible, but the All-Wise God, who sees and knows, and takes care of all, must act, and suffer things to be acted upon very weighty and prudential Motives; and I question not, but should God be so kind, as to give us a Key to open the Cabinet of some of his Mysterious Providences, I mean, communicate his Reasons to us, why he disposes and martials things in that order, method, and manner we see he doth, we should be forced with the Apostle to cry out, *3 2d Cor. O the depth of the Riches, both of the Mercy and Wisdom of God!*

That the Holy Ghost should be bestow'd on the Uncircumcised Gentiles, was a thing which to the Jews seemed not only impossible, but in a manner Impious to believe, it having been a Maxim with them from immemorial times, *That the Divine Presence rests on none, but an Israelite*, yet when they saw the thing effectually done, and understood the Reasons, they could not but break forth into admiration of the infinite Wisdom of God, and praise and magnifie him whose Understanding is Infinite, and whose Wisdom cannot by searching be found out.

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It's a very strange Dispensation, that the greatest part of the World should continue Heathenish and Idolatrous, and the *Mahometans* exceed the *Christians* in number by three parts at least, yet he that shall consider seriously, how *Christians* are sunk, as to the holiness of their Lives, and how unfit by reason of that decay they are for propagating that Holy Religion, they profess; how careless and negligent *Christian Princes* are grown, as to the enlarging of *Christs* Kingdom, and those that have made some attempts that way, have gone about it with sinister designs; how others had rather spend their time at home in picking and feeding Quarrels in the Church, than advance the Unity of the Faith abroad; and how the generality of *Christians* have learn'd to mind the World more than Heaven, and are become lovers of Pleasures, more than lovers of God: and the Religion that is left among them, is either mixt with Idolatry or gross Superstitions, or some other notorious Abuses, and is become a Carnal, rather than a Spiritual Worship, and a Formal rather than a Rational Service; and how many of the *Heathens* and *Mahometans* exceed *Christians* in Vertue and Morality, and how that Charity, Love, and Peace, which was once the great Character of *Christs* Disciples, is banished, and the Seamless Coat of *Christ* torn in a thousand pieces, and those Dissentions cherish'd, maintained, encouraged, and how Religion is become a meer Politick thing; I say, he that shall consider all this, will not wonder so much, that there are no more *Christians* in the World, as admire, there are so many, and that the greatest part of them are not consumed or led into Captivity, when they abuse, and so grossly abuse the best, the noblest, and the most excellent Religion, and reproach and dishonour that God, who sent his Son into the World to Reveal it, thinking, Surely, they will reverence my Son.

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It was Self-denial, contempt of the World, and invincible Patience under Injuries, Stupendous Charity, and very great strictness of Life, that first spread the *Christian* Religion; and the Apostles having shewn us the way, we should have trod in their steps, and if we had, we should without all peradventure have had the same success; for God works by Means, and those having been the Means in the beginning of *Christianity*, they may justly be supposed to be the genuine Means at this day, and where those are neglected, it's part of VVildom to punish Men for their wilful neglect of those Means, by suffering *Heathenism* and *Mahometanism*, not only to continue unmolested, but to grow and advance every day more and more, to the weakening of the Christian Interest; for no wounds provoke so much as those which are given God in the House of his *Friends*, as we see by Gods proceedings with the *Jews*, both in their first and second Captivity.

So that notwithstanding this seeming inequality of Providence, Gods VVildom continues unspotted, and we have reason to give it the highest Encomiums and Celebrations.

3. *The Lord reigneth*; Let's not despair, when either Publick or Private Calamities fall upon us. God is our Refuge, a present help in the time of trouble, therefore will we not fear, though the Earth be moved, and though the Mountains be carried into the midst of the Sea, though the VVaters thereof roar, and be troubled, though the Mountains shake with the swelling thereof, *Pf. 46. 1.* with this *Psalme*, *Pachomius* is said to have chased away a Legion of Devils from his Cell, and I see no reason, but it may serve to support the Soul in the greatest dangers. However things go, God is still good to *Israel*, to them that are of a clean heart; what ever Tumults arise, Go tell the *Righteous*, saith God, *it shall be well*

well with him. What comfort must this be to a serious Christian ! though every thing goes contrary to his wishes and expectations, yet he may be confident, that from those contrarieties of Providence his Soul shall be refresh'd. The Prophet therefore had reason to cry, *Es. 50. 10. Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his Servant that walks in darkness, and hath no light, let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.*

From such a chearful Confidence we may promise our selves great matters, for God looks upon himself as concerned to reward our extraordinary Faith with an extraordinary Providence, as we see in the poor VVidow of *Sarepta* ; who had the courage to give the remainder of the Meal and Oyl she had, to the man of God, and was therefore miraculously supplied in the time of Famine. *Christ* could do no mighty works in his own Countrey, because of the Peoples unbelief, *Mark 6. 5, 6.* it's our diffidence in the time of danger, that makes God stay his hand, and our unbelief keeps the former and latter rain of his favour from us. To trust God, when the Figg-Tree doth not blossom, and to rely upon his goodness, when the labour of the Olive doth fail, is the way to see Miracles, and a preparative for the richest Mercies.

Let come, what will come upon us, nothing can come, but by the order and Providence of God, infinitely Good, and infinitely VVise ; And what is there, that can come amiss, if it come from these two Fountains ? If Infinite Goodness sends that, which the VVorld calls Misery upon me, most certainly there can be no hurt in it ; and if Infinite VVisdom sends it, most certainly, it must be best for me, for if Infinite VVisdom thinks it so, my shallow Understanding hath reason to submit to its most solid Judgment : God denies me what I would have, because he would fain give me, what I should have.

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That which he takes away, may be I do not want, and that Grace, I stand in need of, may be I cannot have, without the other be taken away. A Temporal Blessing sometimes stands in the way of a Spiritual one, and if the lesser be taken away to make room for the greater, it's no more, but what mine own VVisdom would approve of in more trivial concerns. God would have me follow him, not for the *Loaves*, but for the *Miracles* of his Love, and if to make me enamoured with him, he sees it necessary to take away the *Loaves*, it's no more than what a VVise *Physician* doth to a Patient, from whose Lips he takes away the pleasant Draught, to make way for a more wholsom Potion.

The Lord reigneth : Rejoyce Christian ; Let *Israel* rejoyce in him that made him, and let the Children of *Zion* be joyful in their King : Fear not thou Worm *Jacob*, when affliction, when trouble, when anguish comes, when the VVaves and Billows of the VVaters of *Marah* rise. Thy God reigneth, thy King watches over thee, the All-sufficient God is thy refuge, and thy hiding place. Surely he shall deliver thee from the Snare of the Fowler, and from the noisom Pestilence : He shall cover thee with his Feathers, and under his Wings shalt thou trust, his Truth shall be thy Shield and Buckler ; Thou shalt not be afraid for the Terrour by Night, nor for the Arrow that flieth by Day, nor for the Pestilence that walks in Darkness, nor for the Destruction that wasteth at Noon-day ; a thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy Right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee.

Nothing can hurt a good Christian, for whom is reserved the Crown Righteousness in Heaven ; Men may prejudice his Body, but they cannot hurt his Soul ; They may rob him of his Goods, but they cannot take away his Graces ; They may imprison him, but they cannot keep

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keep God out of his Heart ; They may beat him, but they cannot ruine him ; They may make this World bitter to him, but they cannot hinder him from feeding on the sweet Promises of the Gospel. God is thy Shepherd, *Christian*, therefore thou shalt not want. He will anoint thy Head with Oyl, and spread a Table for thee in the midst of thy Enemies, nay, thy Cup shall run over Goodness and Mercy shall follow thee all the days of thy life, and thou shalt dwell at last in the House of God for ever, even in that House, made without hands, Eternal in the Heavens.

4. *The Lord reigneth* : Let's cheerfully submit therefore to his Government ; Shall we pretend to be his subjects, and not be Ruled by him ? Shall we call him our King, and follow our own Imaginations ? Shall he only have the name of our Ruler, while we are resolved to be guided by the Flesh, and by the World ? This were to call him King in jest, as the *Jews* did our Saviour, and to bow the Knee before him, while we buffet him, or run our Sword into his Bowels. Kings on Earth, though they can give Protection to their Subjects, yet they cannot give them being, nor keep their Souls in life, nor protect them from outward and inward troubles. God who is your King, not only can do all this, but actually doth it, and consequently the Motives to be ruled and governed by him, are far greater. I will not launch out here into the vast Sea of his Mercies, what he hath done for our Souls and Bodies, how he hath been with us, when we have gone through the Waters, and with us, when we have passed through the Fire, how he hath loved us in *Christ Jesus*, and what pains he takes with our Immortal Souls, to make them happy ; What a bountiful, what a charitable, what a condescending Prince he hath been to us upon all occasions ; what benefits we reap by his Government, and how every moment

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ment he gives us instances of his kindness. It's enough to put you in mind, that you acknowledge him to be your King, and that word imports obedience to his Laws, else he is either no King to you, or you are Rebels and Apostates.

But while I exhort you to be Ruled and Governed by him, I must not forget, to tell you the measures, you are to observe in your Submission to his Government, and they are these following ;

- i. *Take heed of thinking, that you please the great King of Heaven, by disobeying your King here on Earth in things lawful, and not contrary to the Word of God.* It's impossible you can believe the truth of the Thirteenth Chapter of St. Pauls Epistle to the Romans, and think so. Obeying God, and being subject to the higher Powers, are not contrary, but subordinate Duties. To think you are Saints, when you have courage to control the Orders of your Superiors, is a sign of a graceless heart ; and to fancy, it's Religion, to laugh at what the Supream Magistrate Commands, is to exclude your selves from the Kingdom of Heaven. Such *Divinity* was never heard of in the World, till Vice and Hypocrisie had debauched it, and had such Doctrines been broacht in the *Primitive Church*, they would have called them Rebellion and Heresie. The Primitive Saints never contradicted the Laws of their Superiors, but where God gave an expresse Command to the contrary, and they look't upon't as pride and peevishness to shew disrespect to that Order of Men, which God intended as his Vice-gerents. It was not the wickedness of their Prince, made them neglect their Duty to his Person, nor could the Injuries he did them, tempt them to forget their Obedience. They remembred, what Authority there was in the Country they lived in, it was of God, and because it was so, thought themselves obliged to be subject,

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ject, not so much for Terrour, as for Conscience sake. That *Dominion is founded in Grace*, was a Principle, the *Apostles* had never taught them, and they justly found fault with those that tore the Orders of the Magistrate, which were given for their Persecution and Banishment ; where they could not comply, they suffered, and thought it a greater piece of Devotion, to be Patient under Affronts and Oppositions, than to be their own Carvers, by repelling Force by Violence. *Christ* had taught them not to resist Evil, and they Rationally believed, they were no *Christians*, except they did whatsoever he did Command them.

The Wisdom which is from above, is without Partiality, and he that assents to what God saith, in one thing, but not in another, shews, that the love of the Father is not in him. Where the Conscience suspects the Magistrates Command, as unlawful, it must suffer it self to be informed, not only by persons that serve an Interest, but Impartial Men ; and care must be taken, that what we call Conscience, is not unwillingness to cross our Pride or Humour. Conscience is too often pretended, when we have hardened our selves into Prejudice, and therefore the best Rule to go by, in such cases, is to lay by Interest, and hearken to the clear dictates of unbyassed Reason. When the Magistrate Commands a thing that's doubtful, it's safer to keep our selves to a known Duty, which is submission to their Orders, than to be obstinate in an uncertain conclusion ; and that Christian is likest to have the greatest peace, that walks on the surest side of the Hedge.

2. *Then you submit to him, when you reign over your inordinate desires and passions ;* When you curb your anger, restrain your lusts, moderate your joys, bid your grief and sorrow break forth into Tears for your

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Sins,

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Sins, watch over your Sensual Delights, and keep them within bounds, mortifie your hatred to your fellow Christians, grow eminent in the Love of God, and advance in charity to your Neighbours, kill your Covetousness, and give flame to your Desires after Grace and Mercy. This government in your little World, is that, which pleases the King of Heaven, and you then live like his Subjects, when you Reign and Triumph thus over your Lusts, and force your Hearts into such religious and reasonable Services. He serves not God, but himself, that lets his evil Desires reign over him, and is so far from being submissive to the King of Heaven, that he makes himself a Vassal of the Devil ; This is the mighty priviledge of all the Loyal Subjects of the King of Heaven ; Their being so, makes them Kings, and their inordinate Passions, are the Slaves on which they exercise Dominion and Authority ; Over these God gives them power, and it hath been acknowledged by all Wise Men, that he that conquers these Rebels, is a greater Commander, than he that lays whole Cities and Countreys waste ; for in wasting these, he acts according to his Brutish Desires, but in conquering those Desires, he overcomes himself, and in that consists the perfection of Vertue.

Without a serious attempt of this Self-conquest, your Prayers prevail not in Heaven, and the little Devotions, you pay the Immortal King, are rejected, as senseless Services. Without this, your New Moons, and solemn Assemblies are Abominations, and your treading the Courts of the Lord is looked upon, as the Sacrifice of Fools. The King above is not for outward shews, and he that doth not give him the inward Man, as well as the outward, instead of paying Homage to him, turns his Grace into wantonness. The restraining of
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one inordinate Desire, is more valued in Heaven, than twenty formal Prayers, and the curbing of one Passion, receives greater applauses from the Holy Angels, than a hundred *Lord have Mercy upon me's*. That one act of *Joseph*, in resisting the Temptations of his Mistress, and his own Natural Desires, God approved of more, than of all the Peace-offerings of the Harlot in the *Proverbs*, chap. 7. vers. 14. And *Mary Magdalen's* Tears and Sorrow for Sins, melted *Christs* heart more, than all the pompous Devotions of the *Pharisee*, for in this Sorrow, she reigned gloriously over her sinful Inclinations, while the other continued a Slave to his desire of Vain-glory.

3. *Then you submit to him, and acknowledge him for your King, when you seek first his Kingdom, and his Righteousness*; When you offer unto God the best of your Flock, and let the World have his refuse, and leavings. To give God the sleepest hours of the day, and to bestow the most lively upon the World, is not to acknowledge him for your King, but to make him the VVorlds Servant; and to give him the Lame and Maimed, while your profit, and gain engrosses the Sound, and the fat of your thoughts, is Preposterous Devotion. To Sin as long as you can, and then to turn to him, is to play with Religion, and most certainly, nothing looks so like Mockery, as to think of being serious, when you can serve the VVorld and the Flesh no longer. Either God is not the best of Beings, if he must not have our Principal Adorations; or if he be, our warmest Affections must of necessity be his due. First to secure our Temporal Interest, and then to think of making sure of the Everlasting Riches, is to imagine, that Death will stay for us; And to give our Youth and tender years to the Devil, is to say our Lesson, as they say, VVitches do the Lords Prayer, backward. To be sure, this

52 *Gods Providence in the midst of Confusions.*

this is not to be Subject to that King, who in his actions, is ever Orderly and Regular, and therefore requires his Subjects should be so too.

No Man serves him, that doth not serve him orderly, and to begin our Day, and all our lawful VVorks, and Enterprizes with him, to Consecrate to him the Morning and Strength of our Age, and to make our Carnal and Temporal Interest, truckle to his VVill, is true *Canonical Obedience*. Those that do so, shall reign with him in that Life, his Son hath promised in the Gospel ; who died for this end, that such as yield to these Terms might wear Crowns in Heaven, Crowns not like those of perishable Gold, which decay with Age and Time, but Crowns immarcescible, Crowns which Angels wear, Crowns of Glory, Crowns which are made splendid by the Light of Gods Countenance, Crowns made of Everlasting Light, Crowns which will shine, when the Sun shall shine no more, Crowns which will glitter, when the Stars shall have done twinckling ; in a word, Crowns, the thoughts of which, will transport the Souls that are incircled with them, into Everlasting Comforts and Consolations.

F I N I S.